

## CLAIMS

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What is claimed is:

1. In a computer, an apparatus for software training and technical support, comprising:
  - a graphical user interface window through which a plurality of tasks are accomplished, said window having a plurality of selectable graphical areas;
  - 5 a list of task indications coupled to said window, each task having an associated task indication;
  - a graphical overlay coupled to said window, wherein said overlay is positioned on top of said window;
  - 10 for each task indication, a sequence of instructions being displayed in the graphical overlay, each instruction directing attention to a respective selectable graphical area; and
  - a selector coupled to said window, wherein after selecting a task, the selector selects selectable graphical areas in response to the sequence of instructions, wherein an end user operating said selector learns a sequence associated with a task through actively interfacing with said window.
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  2. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the list of task indications dynamically changes as a function of the selectable graphical areas being displayed in said graphical user interface window.
  3. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the list of task indications is capable of being positioned apart from said graphical user interface window with which it is coupled.
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4. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the tasks displayed in said list of task indications is a function of a mode setting, wherein a mode setting contains at least one setting including a beginner, an intermediate, and an advanced mode setting.

5. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the computer controls a system wherein the tasks displayed in said list of task indications are user-privilege specific.

6. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein the system is a data communication network.

7. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the list of task indications are replaced by a list of task step indications, and wherein each task step is coupled to a respective sequence instruction, wherein each associated task step indication is highlighted in sequence with a respective instruction being displayed.

8. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said graphical overlay is invisible other than the instruction being displayed.

9. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the instruction being displayed includes an information box including at least one of: recommended input, required input, example input, subsequence list, and a description of what to expect next.

10. The apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising recorded voice files or a text-to-speech synthesizer coupled to the sequence of instructions, wherein the instruction being displayed is simultaneously presented audibly.

11. The apparatus according to Claim 10 wherein selection of one or more selectable graphical areas in a sequence before selecting a task automatically highlights a list of possible tasks being performed.

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12. In a computer, a method for software technical support and training, comprising:

- providing a graphical user interface window through which a plurality of tasks are accomplished, said window having a plurality of selectable graphical areas;
- 5 displaying a list of task indications coupled to the window, each task having an associated task indication;
- forming a graphical overlay coupled to said window, wherein said overlay is positioned on top of said window;
- 10 for each task indication, displaying a sequence of instructions in the graphical overlay, each instruction directing attention to a respective selectable graphical area; and
- 15 providing a selector coupled to said window, wherein after selecting a task, the selector selects selectable graphical areas in response to the sequence of instructions, wherein an end user operating said selector learns a sequence associated with a task through actively interfacing with said window.

13. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of displaying task indications includes dynamically changing the list of task indications as a function of the selectable graphical areas being displayed in said graphical user interface window.

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14. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of displaying task indications includes presenting the list of task indications external from said graphical user interface window.

15. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of displaying task indications includes modifying the list of task indications as a function of a mode setting, wherein a mode setting contains at least one setting from a beginner, an intermediate, and an advanced mode setting.

16. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the computer controls a system and wherein the step of displaying task indications includes modifying the list of task indications as a function of a user privilege.

5 17. The method according to Claim 16 wherein the external system is a data communication network.

D 18. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of displaying task indications includes:

10 replacing the list with a plurality of task step indications, wherein each step is coupled to a respective sequence instruction; and  
highlighting each task step indication in sequence with a respective instruction being displayed.

19. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of forming a graphical overlay includes configuring the overlay to allow the selectable graphical areas in the graphical user interface window to be displayed without obstruction.

15 20. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of displaying a sequence of instructions includes displaying an information box, including at least one of: recommended input, required input, example input, subsequence list, and a description of what to expect next.

20 21. The method according to Claim 12 further comprising converting the sequence of instructions to an audio output by means of recorded voice files or a text-to-speech synthesizer coupled to the sequence of instructions, wherein the instruction being displayed is simultaneously presented audibly.

22. The method according to Claim 12 wherein the step of selecting one or more selectable graphical areas in a sequence before selecting a task includes automatically highlighting a list of possible tasks being performed.

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